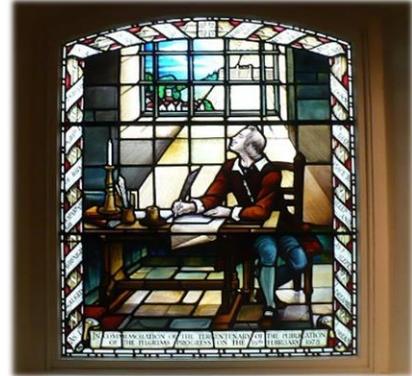


June 3, 2020

## Good morning, Everybody.

I'm going to do something today that in all these years of pastoring I've never done before. I'm going to send the whole church a sermon outline. It's one from last year's series that was entitled, *Parables Preparing for Christ's Coming*.



Just to orient you to it—what you'll be looking at is a copy of the notes that were with me that morning. I generally confine my outlines to both sides of two sheets of 5 ½ by 8 ½ paper. It would be like folding a piece of letter size paper (8 ½ x 11) in the middle so that you now had a little booklet that amounted to 4 pages. If you then wrote notes on all four pages, you'd have what I have with me when I open the Bible and begin to preach.

I don't manuscript entirely. Instead, I make a kind of expanded outline. First there are the points of the outline. These are then expanded with the four standard rhetorical processes: explanation (Exp.), illustration (Ill.), application (App:), and exhortation (Exh.)

Most men's preaching tends to favor either **teaching** or **exhortation**. And usually that difference is decided, not so much by the makeup of the congregation (though that's a factor), but by the nature of the spiritual gifts each preacher has been given by the Holy Spirit.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us . . . *each of us is to exercise them accordingly* . . . he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation. . . (Romans 12:6-8).

Teaching generally occupies more time, since for it to be effective it must employ the many elements required to bring understanding, not compliance only. Parents understand this difference. Their early years of child training lean heavily toward exhortation (*do's* and *don'ts*). And the children comply. But as children mature, their training requires more and more teaching (*here's why, and when,*

*and where, and how* you are to *do* and *not do*). And over time, and through much repetition, the children understand (*hopefully!*) and comply.

Both the teacher/preacher and the exhorter/preacher are trying to achieve the same thing; genuine internal acceptance of God's mind (what Romans 12:2 calls, *the renewing of your mind*). And then—radical life change so that he/she is now in his/her very **nature** (not just behavior), exactly like Jesus Christ in some new respect (what the Bible calls *transformation*). These two things (*renewal of mind* and *transformation*) are what we call spiritual **growth**.

Well . . . that's enough *teaching* about *preaching* for today (smile). But that should help you better understand the mechanics of the homiletics that you'll encounter in the outline below. **But (!)**, the reason for sending you this outline isn't to occupy you with any of that.

My reason for sending it is to reinforce something the scripture comes at us about from many angles; the critical, eternal issue of whether or not we are truly saved. Whether I am truly God's child. Whether I am, in my very nature, qualified to live forever in company with holy angels in the presence of God Almighty. Our Lord is coming. Would you please read the outline below to see if you are qualified to meet Him? (You'll have to overlook any typos or misspellings or sentence fragments, etc. Preaching outlines aren't finished works of art (smile).) Undoubtedly, many, if not most of you are ready. Just as undoubtedly (if the Bible's warnings are true), some of you are not. But you should be. And you can be.

Praying for You About This Today,

Pastor Minnick

**Foolish or Wise Concerning His Coming?**  
Matthew 25:1-13

**Introduction:**

- A. This May Be One Of The Most Misunderstood Of All Parables.  
(Exp: Sometimes a reading, or even a preaching leaves people with more questions than before. One reason is because of attempting to apply too many of the details.)  
(Illus: One 16<sup>th</sup> century interpreter found 15 separate details with spiritual significance. Benjamin Keach found 13 and had over 50 pp. Thomas Shepard, New England Puritan, did a lengthy series that amounts to over 600 pp. But the details aren't meant to teach. The number of the virgins, for instance. Or, the even divisions; don't mean that when the Lord returns a full ½ will be ready and a full ½ will not. The sleep isn't death, revealing that successive generations of believers must fall asleep in death until He returns. The lamps, the oil, midnight, the sellers of oil.)  
(Exp: The details are simply the necessary stage props. The message is primarily in the words and actions of the characters. The props create a setting in which the words and actions seem to occur and be spoken in a real time and real place that people can identify with. Give reality. But the stage set isn't the message, it's the vehicle that holds the message.)
- B. The Message Is In Three Things.
1. The central event; the coming of a bridegroom (Christ).
  2. The final admonition; be alert because the timing is uncertain.
  3. The spiritual state of people who are supposed to be alert; wise or foolish (2).  
(Quest: Are we among the foolish or the wise in our preparation for His coming?)

**I. THE EVENT: THE COMING OF THE BRIDGROOM FOR HIS BRIDE (v 1).**

- A. The Bridegroom Is Christ.
1. The Bible reveals Him to us **in this role at His 1st coming.**
    - a. John the Bapt. identif. himself as the friend of the. . . (John 3:29).  
*You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent ahead of Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.*
    - b. Paul says that He came to . . . (Eph. 5:25-27, 32).  
*Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water of the word, so that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory. . . )*  
  
Paul says that he had espoused the Cor. as a *chaste virgin* (II Cor. 11:2).

c. Our Lord Himself said,

*The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast (Mtt. 9:15).*

2. Now it is **His return** which is in view throughout the Olivet Discourse.

## B. But Who Are The Virgins?

1. May represent the Bride.

(Exp: Have to remember that for the parable to work, there has to be more than one person. And, Christ's bride isn't a single individual, but all the individuals who truly are His own.)

2. May represent friends.

(Exp: A 1st century Jewish wedding took place after a period of betrothal. The groom and friends made their way to the home of the bride. Whole party back to his or his father's house with singing, dancing, clapping, and festivities. Along the way, the word sent ahead that they were coming, and people would turn out. At night, they needed lights.)

Transition: All ten of these virgins are awaiting Him. Everyone is acting like a Christian. There are no atheists in the story. No Hindus, no Muslims, no Buddhists. They know there's a bridegroom, they're acquainted with who he is, they're expecting that he will come.

(App: In thousands and thousands of churches today. . . But the apparent sameness is superficial. Not all who read the Bible, belong to churches, sing in choirs, preach in pulpits, sit on deacon boards, preside as elders, teach the young people, go on mission teams, write commentaries, or pursue higher Christian education are going to be prepared for His coming. There is a radical difference in the actual spiritual state of people in the churches this morning.)

## **II. THE RADICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WAITING (vv 2-4).**

### A. What Is The Difference?

(Illus: They did not all obtain and possess oil. The lamps may be small oil lamps, in which a wick burned in a pool of olive oil. Or they may be cloths wound tightly around sticks or poles, and saturated with olive oil, and held up to burn like a torch (John 18:3). Some have oil for this and some do not. And it is of their own doing or not doing.)

(Exp: What is the oil? It is a figure for what a person makes a person a true Christian. So that he truly is a light.)

**Matthew 5:14** ¶ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

(Quest/Answ: If you ask what it is that gives this light, the Bible identifies several things that are true of genuine Christians. In Mtt. 5 it is good works. But these are only proofs of what is deeper. True Christians possess new life. It is verifiable by its appetites. True Christians possess the Holy Spirit. In other passages illustrations are used. Soil that is soft and receptive. Man with a wedding

garment. Vine that produces grapes. A man who builds his house on a rock.)

(Exp: There's something additional in this passage. Look at v 12. This is just like He warns about at the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount (Mtt. 7:21-23). The difference is whether or not the bridegroom **knows us** to be His bride.) The Lord knows those who are His (II Tim. 2:19). Giving intense attention to this. . .)

B. The Difference Displays, Right Now, Whether We Are Wise Or Foolish (2).

(App: It is foolish to know these things and not to prepare. Just as at His 1st coming, many were foolishly unprepared. Others were wisely prepared. This will be true again, both when He comes to catch His bride away before the judgments of the Tribulation, and it will be true again at the end of the Tribulation when He returns to earth the 2<sup>nd</sup> time.)

C. Change Of Condition Must Be Made Now, At This Time, Not Then When He Comes.

1. You cannot get the "oil" (the change) from anyone else.

(Illus: Last century there was an exquisite carving in marble representing the two groups. The wise person is kneeling, in the act of trimming her lamp. The foolish seems to be begging her for some of her oil. Her face is full of the most pathetic entreaty. But her sister, with a look of inexpressible sadness and her hand uplifted as if to guard her treasure seems to be saying, *Not so.*

Someone looking at it said, *She should have given her the oil.* Who among us has not thought this very thing upon first reading this parable? But the owner of the marble sculpture present and replied, *If you and your neighbor had each signed a bill to pay a certain sum of money on a particular day, and you by dint of hard work and saving and perseverance had been able to lay away just enough to meet your debt, while your neighbor, wasted his hours and made no provision, and then on the morning when the debt came due ran to you beseeching you for money to help him pay, would you give your money to him, if by doing so you were left without sufficient to pay your own debt?*)

(Exp: But it isn't transferable anyway. Spiritual life cannot be given to us by someone else. You cannot borrow a relationship to Christ. The most holy person you know cannot give you any of their own walk with the Lord. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* I Pet. 4:18).

(App: What right do you have to come to the wedding? "Well, I don't really have any of my own, but my mother was a godly woman and I liked her a lot." But I asked, "What right do you have?" "Well, my SS teachers, my youth workers, my DVBS teachers. . ."

Your mother's faith cannot save you. Your wife's faith. Your SS teachers.)

b. You cannot get the "oil" for yourself then. It's too late when He comes.

(Illus: The time comes when it's too late to prepare for an exam. Too late to pay a bill on time and avoid a late pay fee. Too late to get a life insurance policy. Too late to. . .

(App: There is no second chance. There is no purgatory or angel to preach to you one last time. Are you saying, *I want to sin a little while longer. I can't change now. I can't come now.*)

(Illus: Those who did not get out of Europe when they could, and were trapped in the Holocaust.)

## CONCLUSION:

### A. How Sobering For Those Of Us Who Are Genuinely Serving Him.

(App: That after all our visiting and witnessing and warning and preaching and teaching. After all our missions. Our praying and counseling—and still, many at the end will still be in their trespasses and sins.)

(Illus: Many times in many ways the Bible foretells this. Foolish and wise builders. Wheat and tares. Good fish and bad. Sheep and goats. Hypocrites and genuine believers. Genuine faith that shows itself with works, dead faith that has nothing but a profession. The converted and the unconverted. The saved and the lost.)

### B. How Alarming For Those Who Are Not Preparing Themselves.

(Exp: Repentance, faith, personal relationship to Christ, holiness of life are **not just words!** They are **requirements**. The reality of this, and the value of your soul and your need of the Savior will burst upon your mind one day like a thunderous flash of lightning—but too late!)

### C. Never Be Content. . .

(Exp: With anything less than a true relationship to the Bridegroom. **Never** rest until you know that you have it.)